

Music
at Convocation Hall

Patricia Tao
Jacques Després
Two pianos, four hands

Saturday, April 9, 2005

7:15 pm *Pre-Concert Introduction*

by Dr David Cook

Main floor, Convocation Hall

8:00 pm *Concert*



Arts Building
University of Alberta



UNIVERSITY OF
ALBERTA

Program

- | | |
|---|--|
| Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major,
K. 448 (1781)
Allegro con spirito
Andante
Allegro molto | Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791) |
| The Sorcerer's Apprentice (1897)
(arranged by the composer) | Paul Dukas
(1865-1935) |
| Winnsboro Cottonmill Blues (1979)
(arranged by the composer) | Frederic Rzewski
(b. 1938) |

Intermission

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Sonata for Two Pianos in F Minor,
Op. 34bis (1864)
Allegro non troppo
Andante, un poco Adagio
Scherzo: Allegro
Finale: Poco sostenuto-Allegro non troppo | Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897) |
|---|--------------------------------|

Program Notes

by Allison Fairbairn

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

b. Salzburg, 27 January 1756

d. Vienna, 5 December 1791

Sonata for Two Pianos in D Major, K 448 (1781)

Allegro con spirito

Andante

Allegro molto

This work is often used in research involving the effects of music, specifically the "Mozart Effect". It has been suggested that the K448 sonata can improve spatial reasoning skills and general intelligence, and can reduce the occurrence of epileptic seizures!

In the summer of 1781 Mozart left his patron, the Archbishop of Salzburg, and decided to establish himself independently in the city of Vienna, where he composed, performed and taught. One of his first pupils in Vienna was Josepha von Aurnhammer, with whom he often performed duets. A talented pianist in her own right, she commissioned this work for the two of them to play. Writing a sonata for two pianos was unusual at the time, since solo piano music was almost entirely written for the home rather than the recital or concert hall, and very few homes had more than one piano. In taking up the challenge of writing a piano sonata for four hands, Mozart experimented with a multitude of new sonorities and produced a sparkling gem of colour, brilliance and exuberance, with some striking dynamic contrasts and surprises. Although the Sonata is fundamentally sunny and joyous, its originality and inspiration transports it to both high and deep realms. There are three movements, displaying the virtuosity of the player while exhibiting Mozart's intuitive understanding of the potential 'orchestral' effect of two pianos.

Paul Dukas

b. Paris, 1 October 1865

d. Paris, 17 May 1935

The Sorcerer's Apprentice (1897)

Ever since Walt Disney's *Fantasia* in 1940, Paul Dukas's Symphonic Scherzo after Goethe has been inseparable from the image of Mickey Mouse trying to stem the battalions of buckets marching through the sorcerer's cellar. That sequence has been a mixed blessing for the reputation of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*: the piece may have become a popular classic as a result, but such familiarity has bred, if not exactly contempt, then at least a taking for granted of the work's brilliance as a piece of orchestral writing.

Dukas was known for intense self-scrutiny that, especially in the second half of his life, resulted in his destroying more music than he allowed to survive, and his reputation now rests on just 15 works, including a symphony, a ballet (*La Péri*), two major piano works and one unfairly neglected opera (*Arianne et Barbe-Bleue*, to a libretto by Maeterlinck).

The Sorcerer's Apprentice was written in parallel with the symphony and first performed in the same year (1897); some of its themes share more than just a family likeness with that work, and it has been suggested that Dukas originally intended it as the symphony's scherzo. But the bigger work is entirely abstract and, as the subtitle indicates, *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* is explicitly programmatic. Based on Goethe's poem of the same name, it is self-contained in its own right.

The construction is very rigorous; Dukas was essentially a conservative composer who idolized Beethoven, but tended to pursue his harmonic and rhythmic schemes to their logical conclusion. The way in which the main theme of the scherzo accumulates from tiny cells fascinated the modernists around him, and both Stravinsky's *Fireworks* and Debussy's *Jeux* are indebted to Dukas's method of construction. But the genius of the piece is that for all its formal rigour it seems natural and, in its dazzling orchestral colours, vividly pictorial. Dukas himself arranged the piece for two pianos.

Frederic Rzewski

b. Westfield, Massachusetts, 13 April 1938

***Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues* (1979)**

Frederic Rzewski studied with Walter Piston, Roger Sessions, and Milton Babbitt at Harvard and Princeton Universities. His acquaintance with John Cage and David Tudor strongly influenced his development in both composition and performance.

In Rome in the mid-sixties he formed the MEV (Musica Elettronica Viva) group, which quickly became known for its pioneering work in live electronics and improvisation. Bringing together both classical and jazz avant-gardists (like Steve Lacy and Anthony Braxton), MEV developed an aesthetic of music as a spontaneous collective process, an approach that was shared with other experimental groups of the same period. Himself a formidable pianist, Rzewski is unusual among contemporary composers in writing for the piano with a full appreciation of its epic qualities, narrative abilities and tremendous historical legacy - all without sacrificing his unmistakably twentieth-century voice.

Based on an actual millworkers' tune of the 1930's, *Winnsboro Cotton Mill Blues* incorporates elements of Minimalism and the Blues, and is one of Rzewski's most striking character pieces. Tone clusters graphically depict the deafening roar of the cotton mill, with the singing of the workers first buried by the machines' ruckus, then fighting it, emerging above it, and periodically overtaken. The composition closely follows the lyrics of the original tune, including a brilliant depiction of the last verse: "When I die, don't bury me deep, bury me down on Six Hundred Street; Place a bobbin in my hand, so I can spool in the promised land."

Johannes Brahms

b. Hamburg, 7 May 1833

d. Vienna, 3 April 1897

Sonata for Two Pianos in F minor, Op. 34bis (1864)

Allegro non troppo

Andante, un poco Adagio

Scherzo. Allegro

Finale. Poco sostenuto. Allegro non troppo

There are two existing versions of this piece - the "34b" and one for a quintet (pianoforte, two violins, viola, and cello) which is marked "op. 34". In reality, there were three separate versions. The first ("34a", for strings), however, was destroyed by Brahms himself, who felt it was inadequate. In the two versions which are still extant the scores, organisation and developments are identical. There is some confusion over which piece was composed first. The version for two pianos was the first to see the light of day.

The first public performance of this piece was held in Vienna in April 1864 and was played by the composer himself and pianist Carl Tausig. Brahms remained very attached to the piano version even though its first public performance was not a happy one - indeed, it was a veritable fiasco. However, Brahms did not allow himself to be influenced by this unhappy debut and continued to advance its cause with conviction. Clara Schumann performed it on at least three occasions - with Rubinstein, with Hermann Levi, and with Brahms himself. On this last occasion Princess Anne of Assia was present, and her appreciation of the work was such that Brahms later felt it his duty to dedicate this work to her.

Patricia Tao joined the U of A Faculty in 2002. For 10 years as pianist of the Guild Trio, she performed throughout North America and Europe. Dr. Tao also toured Europe as an "Artistic Ambassador" for the United States and throughout the U.S. for Columbia Artist's Community Concert series. She served as an artist-in-residence at the Tanglewood Music Center and the University of Virginia and has given live radio broadcasts on NPR's "Performance Today," WNYC's "Around New York," WQXR's "The Listening Room" and the St. Louis public television series "Premiere Performances." Commissions and premieres of new works by leading American composers include William Bolcom, Harvey Sollberger and Sheila Silver. She has recorded on the CRI and Arktos labels.

Dr Tao received her Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, Master of Music with Distinction from Indiana University, and Doctor of Musical Arts from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. Her principal teachers were Leonard Shure, Gyorgy Sebok and Gilbert Kalish, and in chamber music, Bernard Greenhouse, Leon Fleisher, Julius Levine and Timothy Eddy. Previously, she taught at Western Washington University and the University of Virginia.

Acclaimed by the press for his performances and recordings, pianist **Jacques Després** has appeared as soloist with many symphony orchestras under the baton of conductors including Otto-Werner Muller, Franz-Paul Decker, Jens Nygaard and Simon Streatfield. He also shared the stage in gala concerts with internationally renowned pianists Radu Lupu, Lazar Berman, Ilana Vered, David Owen Norris, and Nicolai Petrov. Després tours have included numerous recitals broadcast on CBC radio. Després was recipient of the Frank Kopp Memorial Prize at the University of Maryland International Piano Competition, the First Prize at the Montreal Symphony Orchestra Competition; and the 'Prix d'Europe' awarded by the Musical Academy of Quebec. He also received grants from the Juilliard School, the Quebec Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Dr Després was Artistic Director of the 'Summer Serenades' at the Staller Center of the New York State University at Stony Brook, where he also completed a doctorate in performance. He holds a Masters degree from the Juilliard School of Music, an Artist Diploma from Indiana University, and a Premier Prix de Piano from the Conservatoire de Québec. He studied with György Sebök, Gilbert Kalish, Adele Marcus, William Masselos and Christiane Sénart. Jacques Després' numerous recordings are available on the Eroica, VDE/Gallo, Naxos, and Arktos labels. Jacques Després is Associate Professor of Piano at the University of Alberta.

Upcoming Events

April

10 Sunday, 3:00 pm

The University of Alberta Concert Band

Wendy Grasdahl, Director

Featuring works by Robert Russell
Bennett, Edward Elgar, Norman Dello
Joio, and Camille Saint-Saëns
Admission: \$10/student/senior, \$15/adult

10 Sunday, 3:00 pm

Master of Music Recital

Rob Curtis, choral conducting

Featuring works by
Purcell, Aguiar, Stanford,
Janequin, de Lassus, Brahms,
Somers, Henderson, and Debussy
St Timothy's Anglican Church
Free admission

10 Sunday, 8:00 pm

The University of Alberta Symphony Orchestra

Tanya Prochazka, Conductor

Schumann *Konzertstück*, Op 86
for Four Solo Horns and Orchestra
Shostakovich *Cello Concert No. 1*
Soloist **Anthony Bacon**,
Winner, USO Concerto Competition
Moussorgsky
Pictures at an Exhibition
Admission: \$10/student/senior, \$15/adult

11 Monday, 12:00 noon

Noon Hour Organ Recital

featuring graduate and undergraduate
students of the University of Alberta
Department of Music
Free admission

11 Monday, 8:00 pm

Master of Music Recital

Ruston Vuori, piano

Featuring works by JS Bach, Beethoven
Free admission

15 Friday, 8:00 pm

Master of Music Recital

Eileen Kim, piano

Free admission

18 Monday, 8:00 pm

Composers Concert

Featuring recent works of
U of A Student Composers
Studio 27, Fine Arts Building
Free admission

28 Thursday, 6:30 pm

Doctor of Music Lecture Recital

Bianca Baci, piano

Studio 27, Fine Arts Building
Free admission



Please donate to Campus Food Bank

Unless otherwise indicated

Convocation Hall, Arts Building, University of Alberta

Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without notice.

Please call 492-0601 to confirm concerts (after office hours a recorded message will inform you of any changes to our schedule).